

Wangzhing Rabney Festival

Every year the village temple in Wangzhing organizes Wangzhing Rabney (དབང་ཞིང་རབ་ལྷན་སྐྱོད་). It is believed that Lam Gyalwa Lhanangpa, who came from Sombrang Gonpa in Bumthang, subdued the demon at Dragong in Minjey, Lhuentse. The Lam Gyalwa Lhanangpa, after subduing the demon, blessed the people. In return, the people offered land to the Lama and the place was named as Wangzhing or (དབང་ཞིང་) meaning, “land for the blessing”. The local elders narrate that Wangzhing Lhakhang was built by terton Pema Lingpa. It is believed that the people from the nearby villages gathered in this place to receive Wang (དབང་) or empowerment from the Terton Pema Lingpa during the consecration ceremony of newly constructed Wangzhing Lhakhang. Terton Pema Lingpa initiated diverse Tercham, which can be witnessed even today during the festival. Thereafter, the festival came to be known as Wangzhing Rabney, where Wang (དབང་) means blessing, Zhing (ཞིང་) means land and Rabney means consecration ceremony of newly constructed temple.



Wangzhing temple in Minjey, Lhuentse
Photographer: Sonam Tobgye (former researcher of Lhuentse)

The first day is celebrated with Nubcham (ལྷུ་བ་འཆམ་) by the local community. The Nubcham is held towards the evening of 24th day of the 7th month of the Bhutanese calendar. Gonpo (མགོན་པོ་) and Gonmo (མགོན་མོ་) are major dances performed on the Nubcham day.



Gonpo and Gonmo dance performed on the Nubcham day
Photographer: Sonam Tobgye

On the second day, Boar Dance or Phag cham (ཕག་ཆུང་) is performed followed by treasure dances of Zhana mask dance, 12 animals birth signs dance and other secret dances.



Dance of Phagcham or Boar Dance
Photographer: Sonam Tobgye



Zhana mask dancers at temple courtyard
Photographer: Sonam Tobgye



12 animals birth signs dancers
Photographer: Sonam Tobgye



People offer their fresh grains to the Gonpo and Gonmo
Photographer: Sonam Tobgye

The festival concludes by dance of three male relatives. As per the local community, this three relative's dance concludes the festival, because during the consecration ceremony of the temple, three people from the other hamlet came to witness the ceremony, but they arrived towards the nightfall when the ceremony was about to close. The three relatives went to visit Terton Pema Lingpa. Terton informed them that the consecration ceremony had already ended, but still he made these three male relatives conclude the sanctification ceremony and even today whoever attains the festival gets opportunity to witness the dance of the three relatives.

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